

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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SIL-01 IO-13 DPW-01 HA-05 /094 W  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5184  
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 5758

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, NU  
SUBJECT: NATIONAL DIALOGUE: CONTINUING PREPARATIONS

SUMMARY: ACTIVITIES CONTINUE IN PREPARATION FOR THE "NATIONAL DIALOGUE" BETWEEN THE REGIME AND ITS OPPONENTS. IT APPEARS THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WILL REMAIN ACTIVE AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE OPPOSITION MAY BE ABLE TO AGREE ON A COMMON AGENDA AND REPRESENTATION. WHEN THAT HAPPENS THE BALL WILL BE IN SOMOZA'S COURT. END SUMMARY

1. THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMISSION MET ON DECEMBER 16 AND 20 WITH OPPOSITION GROUPS TO ATTEMPT TO ACCELERATE AGREEMENT ON POINTS TO BE RAISED IN THE DIALOGUE AND SELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES. THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS RESPONSES FROM OPPOSITION PARTIES AND PRIVATE SECTOR GROUPS TO THE COMMISSION'S REQUEST FOR VIEWPOINTS ON THE AGENDA AND THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL COINCIDENCE OF VIEWS. HOWEVER, THE PROCESS OF SELECTING REPRESENTATIVES HAS BEEN A PROBLEM. WHETHER UDEL, A COALITION OF PARTIES AND LABOR GROUPS, WOULD HAVE ONE REPRESENTATIVE WHILE OTHER SEPARATE PARTIES OR FACTIONS WOULD ALSO HAVE ONE REPRESENTATIVE  
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PRESENTATIVE HAS BEEN AN ISSUE WHICH OPENED UP JEALOUSIES AND THE PRESTIGE FACTOR. WHETHER THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE CHURCH WOULD CONTINUE TO BE INVOLVED WAS ANOTHER ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED.

2. THERE NOW APPEARS TO BE EMERGING A CONSENSUS THAT THERE WILL BE ABOUT SEVEN REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE OPPOSITION; TWO OR THREE FROM UDEL; ONE OFFICIAL CONSERVATIVE; ONE AGUERO-FACTION CONSERVA-

TIVE; ONE INDEPENDENT CONSERVATIVE; AND ONE NON-UDEL-FACTION SOCIAL CHRISTIAN. IT HAS BEEN HOPED THAT ANOTHER PERSON MIGHT BE FOUND FROM AMONG THE TWELVE NICARAGUANS WHO GAVE THE ORIGINAL IMPETUS TO THE DIALOGUE INITIATIVE.

3. UDEL LEADERS HAVE INDICATED THEY WANT TO SEE THE DIALOGUE AGENDA LIMITED TO ISSUES WHICH CAN BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM SUCH AS AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS AND EXILES, INVESTIGATION OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS, REFORM OF THE TELEVISION AND RADIO CODE, NON-SOMOZA CONTROL OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, ETC. SUCH INITIATIVES COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED IMMEDIATELY AND WOULD NOT RISK THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE 1972 KUPIE KUMI PACT WHICH RESULTED IN A NEW CONSTITUTION WHICH PERMITTED SOMOZA TO BE REELECTED IN 1974.

4. IN A CONVERSATION ON DECEMBER 21 WITH THE AMBASSADOR, ARCHBISHOP OBANDO Y BRAVO, WHO PRESIDES OVER THE DIALOGUE COMMISSION, INDICATED THAT THE CHURCH WOULD REMAIN A DRIVING FORCE FOR CHANGE IN NICARAGUA. HE REFERRED TO HIS RECENT PARTICIPATION IN A THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE ON NON-VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA. HE SAID THE CONFERENCE HAD FOCUSED ON THE FACT THAT NON-VIOLENCE NEED NOT BE PASSIVE. HE SAID THE CHURCH MUST TAKE AN ACTIVE POLITICAL ROLE. HE SAID THERE WERE SEVERAL STEPS WHICH COULD BE TAKEN IN A "NON-VIOLENT" CAMPAIGN TO EFFECT CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT INCLUDING A GENERAL STRIKE. OBANDO SAID HE FELT CONDITIONS IN NICARAGUA WERE NOW DIFFERENT FROM THE PAST HE SAID HE FELT THERE WAS A MUCH HIGHER AND MORE WIDESPREAD LEVEL OF SOCIAL CONSCIENCE THAN PREVIOUSLY.

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5. THE ONLY GROUPS WHICH HAVE BEEN ATTACKING THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE MOVEMENT ARE THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY FACTION LED BY FORMER PCN PRESIDENT FERNANDO AGUERO AND THE FSLN GUERRILLAS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS SUCH AS THE REVOLUTIONARY STUDENT FRONT (FER). THE AGUERO FACTION MAY YET LESSEN ITS OPPOSITION TO THE DIALOGUE, ITS CONTINUED OPPOSITION WOULD NOT BE SIGNIFICANT. AGUERO WAS LARGELY DISCREDITED POLITICALLY AS A RESULT OF THE 1972 PACT WITH SOMOZA WHEN HE LED THE PCN.

6. COMMENT. THE GROUPS WHICH CONTINUE TO PLAN FOR THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ARE DEMONSTRATING FOR THE MOST PART MATURE POLITICAL ANALYSIS WHICH AUGURS WELL FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF AVOIDING STERILE DISCUSSION AND PERHAPS ACHIEVING SOME POSITIVE RESULTS. THE INDICATION THAT THE CHURCH WILL REMAIN ACTIVE IN PROMOTING CHANGE WILL ALSO BE IMPORTANT IN PRESSURING SOMOZA TO BE RESPONSIVE TO REASONABLE DEMANDS FOR CHANGE. IF THE DIALOGUE COMMISSION SUCCEEDS IN OBTAINING AGREEMENT AMONG THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND FACTIONS AND PRIVATE SECTOR GROUPS ON REPRESENTATION AND ON A REASONABLE AGENDA, THE BALL WILL CLEARLY BE IN SOMOZA'S COURT. HOW HE RESPONDS IN SELECTING HIS REPRESENTATION IN THE DIALOGUE AND HOW HE RESPONDS TO THE AGENDA ITEMS WILL BE AN IMPORTANT TEST OF HIS WIL-

INGNESS TO ACCOMMODATE.  
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## Message Attributes

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